

Fall 2009

# White privilege and counseling: A model for expanding awareness

Amanda Badger  
*James Madison University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/edspec201019>

 Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Badger, Amanda, "White privilege and counseling: A model for expanding awareness" (2009). *Educational Specialist*. 32.  
<https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/edspec201019/32>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Educational Specialist by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [dc\\_admin@jmu.edu](mailto:dc_admin@jmu.edu).

White Privilege and Counseling:  
A Model for Expanding Awareness  
Amanda M. Badger

A research project submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Educational Specialist

Department of Graduate Psychology

December 2009

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iii
I. Introduction .....	1
II. Review of the Literature .....	2
White Privilege and its Relationship to Counseling	
Need for Inclusion of White Privilege Training	
Current Inclusion of White Privilege in Training	
Reactions to the Inclusion of White Privilege in Training	
III. Expanding White Privilege Awareness in Counseling .....	13
Purpose of Training	
Facilitation Considerations	
Utilization of Activities and Resources	
Limitations and Recommendations	
IV. Conclusion .....	32
V. References .....	34

## Abstract

This paper discusses the need for an expansion of awareness of White privilege within the counseling community. It reviews the history of White privilege in American society and the counseling profession, and assesses its current role in counseling relationships, to include: counselor-client relationships, counselor-counselor relationships, and counselor-supervisor relationships. The need to expand White privilege training for counselors and counselor educators is explored, and a model to expand awareness in counselor training is provided with recommended resources and tools to assist in meeting this need.

White Privilege and Counseling:  
A Model for Expanding Awareness

Introduction

Self-awareness is pertinent to being an ethical and effective counselor. In the 2009 standards set forth by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, it is stated that self-awareness is a necessary pre-requisite for counselor fitness, and it is mandated by the council that accredited programs offer opportunities for counselor trainees to advance in their self-awareness through a number of educational and experiential offerings (CACREP, 2009). While these standards are encouraged in the counseling community, the concept of being self-aware is difficult to assess, though the recognition of its need is widely supported in counseling and psychology literature (Hansen, 2009). Research has suggested that clinician self reports of higher levels of self-awareness positively correlate with higher levels of helpfulness, as also reported by clinicians and their clients (Williams, 2008).

The opportunities for counselors to increase their levels of knowledge regarding their own thought constructs are provided both personally and professionally, but must be examined and processed by the counselor for increasing development of self awareness to occur. One critical area of this self awareness for counselors must be multicultural competency. This is deemed to be critical by the American Counseling Association, as they specify in their 2005 Code of Ethics that “counselor educators infuse material related to multiculturalism/diversity into all courses and workshops for the development of professional counselors” (American Counseling Association, 2005, Section F.6.b.) Often, counselors experience multicultural competency trainings throughout their

graduate education, yet due to a number of factors that will be outlined in this paper, they are not always sufficiently prepared to work with clients different from themselves, including the area of multiculturalism.

The American Counseling Association (ACA) mandates that counselors be “aware of their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors,...and respect the diversity of clients, trainees, and research participants” (American Counseling Association, 2005, Section A.4.) To meet this mandate, counselors must be educated on not only multiculturalism in general, but also the recognition of White privilege and the impact it can have on a number of counseling relationships, including: counselor and supervisor, counselor and client, and counselor and counselor. The recognition and exploration of White privilege is essential for both counselors who are White and non-White, as the impacts that White privilege have had on the dominant culture and others are profound (Manglitz, 2003). By exploring White privilege, counselors are able to not only learn a multitude of cultural considerations, but are also able to examine their own prejudices, biases, and stereotypes of others.

To combat negative emotions and encourage fully accepting one self and one's place in society regarding race, it is encouraged that those entering the counseling profession are able to not only learn about other cultures, but also to fully embrace one's own. Exploring White privilege, especially for White counselors, is a large part of this experience. Hays (2008) cited Gerald Wing Sue when writing that counselors who are allowed to participate in this exploration are more likely to be defined as culturally competent. According to Hays (2008), culturally competent counselors are “those who

have self-awareness of values and biases, understand client worldviews, and intervene in a culturally appropriate manner.” (p. 95)

This paper seeks to demonstrate the need for counselors to increase their levels of self-awareness in the realm of White privilege, and offers a model by which active expansion of White privilege awareness can be successful. Additionally, resources are identified at the conclusion to assist counselors and counselor educators as they explore ways to address this need and expand awareness on White privilege within the counseling community.

### Literature Review

#### *White Privilege and its Relationship to Counseling*

Due to the broad applications of White privilege and its pervasive nature, White privilege as it relates to the counseling profession, the counseling relationship, and counselors will be focused on for the purpose of this paper. White privilege has a long standing history in America. Beginning with the period in which slavery was accepted and encouraged, White men (and women) had an economical, political, and social advantage over those who were not White (Herlihy, Pierce, & Watson, 2006). While White privilege existed, it wasn't until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century that the concept was defined and acknowledged by scholars. Consequently, it wasn't until the late 1960s and 1970s that cross cultural counseling and multicultural competence was written about and valued in the psychological realm (Herlihy, Pierce, & Watson, 2006). As the ideas surrounding multicultural competence developed, the study of Whiteness also began to be included, and thus the emphasis on White privilege and its impact on counselors and the counseling

relationship increased. Today, it is a concept that is still gaining recognition and value in both the counseling field and American society.

White privilege is often defined as the systematic advantages of being White (Tatum, 1997). Therefore, within systems of institutional racial oppression, it refers to the unearned advantages and benefits that are bestowed upon Whites. These advantages and benefits are often invisible to the dominant White group and rarely challenged by them (Case, 2007). White privilege is born from the system of racism, which is commonly thought of as a system that combines privilege and power. It is constructed from individual acts, institutional advantages, and cultural practices (Arminio, 2001). Racism has a long standing history in the United States, and as a result, White privilege has also been a mainstay in American society. For example, these benefits include feelings of superiority, membership in the norm, and the power or 'privilege' to ignore race and/or object to the system of privilege. Coinciding, it is a benefit that many who are White have the privilege of not exploring, discussing, or examining the advantages and constraints of race (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001).

Pertaining to the counseling relationship, many believe that it is not only ethical for counselors to explore their relationship to white privilege, but unethical if they do not. This is especially believed true when White counselors are in a therapeutic relationship with those who are culturally different from themselves. Due to the necessity that counselors embrace a non-judgmental, inclusive, do no harm stance, as set forth in the 2005 American Counseling Association Code of Ethics, it is imperative that they are competent in areas of counseling all individuals, or have awareness of what aspects of themselves may inhibit their therapeutic aid to others (Herlihy, Pierce, & Watson, 2006).

Although many believe the preceding statements regarding the importance of awareness to be accurate, it is also necessary to recognize the pro-western bias that has existed in psychology since its beginning. This is largely due to the now defunct idea of scientific racism, which purported that those who were white were genetically superior to those who were non-white (Herlihy, Pierce, & Watson, 2006). Today, there is an unspoken power in the counselor-counselee dynamic, and while it is often not acknowledged, it is a central dynamic in cross-cultural counseling relationships.

In the case of White counselors, in part, because of their privilege, they may not have examined their genuine attitudes and stereotypes. Resulting from these unexplored stereotypes and attitudes, counselors can often make stereotypical or assumptive statements to their clients, that can harm the trust and non-judgmental rapport that is expected in counseling relationships. Often, White counselors have the benefit of not exploring White privilege due to their privilege. Whites typically have the benefit of being in the company of other Whites, and in a profession where the vast majority of counselors and counselor educators are White; the lasting impacts of cross cultural dynamics with counselors who have not assessed their own stereotypes and levels of awareness can be detrimental in many arenas (Arredondo & Fouad, 2007). Keeping this in mind, it is necessary for supervisors, counselors, and counselors in training to actively seek out their own meaning of Whiteness and White privilege and explore its impact in their own lives and the impact it has on their relationships with clients. These effects can be seen both between two members of the same race (usually with two members having differing levels of awareness), and, most commonly, two members of different cultural back grounds (Arredondo & Fouad, 2007).

### *Need for Inclusion of White Privilege Training*

As American society evolves, it is imperative that the counseling profession evolves concurrently. In 2000, approximately 70% of American society was comprised of non-Hispanic Whites, but by the year 2100, it is projected that 60% of American society will be comprised of non-Whites, meaning only 40% of Americans would then be non-Hispanic Whites (Hays, 2008). This statistic illustrates the need for movement in the counseling community toward exploration of multicultural studies and White privilege, as the demographics of clients are continually changing. In contrast, the vast majority of counselors in America are currently non-Hispanic Whites, and the projected figures indicate this trend will continue (Chang, 2003). Therefore the urgency for counseling programs to address the growing needs of their clients and educate counselors in training on multicultural perspectives in counseling including White privilege is increasing.

While many counseling programs recognize the importance of multicultural competence and often include a course covering this area of counseling, few training programs offer an adequate exploration into white privilege and its meaning in the counseling relationship (Niehuis, 2005). This lack of exploration is due to many factors, with one being that counselor educators are dominantly non-Hispanic Whites as well. Therefore, Eurocentric patterns of thinking and teaching often dominate counseling programs. This domination is not intentional, as it is often due to counselor educators being unaware of the perpetuations of racism and alternative institutionalized forms of oppression. The domination is; however, pervasive, resulting in a continued cycle of neglect in this concentration that is growing in importance continually (Chang, 2003). Due to the ethical responsibilities of the profession and the ever changing demographics

of American society, it is imperative that counselors receive proper introduction to these concepts through meaningful and thought provoking readings, discussions, and experiential activities allowing them to explore their own levels of awareness and feelings about White privilege (Niehuis, 2005).

Chang and Hays (2003) examined the implications of White privilege in supervision, as it relates to the counseling profession, in their article *White Privilege, Oppression, and Racial Identity: Implications for Supervision*. In the article, Chang and Hays (2003) purported that counselor educators are the gatekeepers of the profession, and therefore must examine their own biases, prejudices, and feelings regarding White privilege prior to teaching future counselors. If biases, prejudices, and feelings are not examined, and teachings on multicultural competence -- including White privilege -- are not sufficient, then the consequences for counseling trainees can include; but are not exclusive of: detachment, the process of separating from an experience; distancing, keeping away from an experience; and avoidance, vacating or clearing away from an experience. These characteristics can occur both in peer-based relationships and counselor-client relationships. Because Whites benefit from White privilege and racial oppression, they typically do not want to acknowledge their participation in the systematic advantages that are experienced daily. To acknowledge these differences would require Whites to examine the benefits they receive and can create dissonance between accepting these benefits and fighting racism (Hays, 2003).

Typically, privilege and oppression are two interrelated constructs that affect individuals on numerous levels and are largely influenced by one's individual experiences. One potential impact of White counselors working in relationship with non-

White clients can be the use of microaggressions, which are damaging not only to the therapeutic relationship, but also to the client himself. Microaggressions can appear in counseling relationships when counselors, who are well meaning and egalitarian in beliefs, have not examined their negative stereotypes and attitudes about ethnic or racial minority groups, sometimes resulting from scientific racism and other concepts derived from institutionalized racism, and yet continue to work with individuals from those groups regularly (Arredondo & Fouad, 2007). Due to varied experiences, the level of awareness of one's cultural background and its associated meaning can be placed at any one point on a spectrum of unaware to proactively aware. Often, as levels of awareness increase, one is better able to separate from feelings of resentment, shame, guilt, defensiveness, or responsibility. Those who find themselves unaware tend to be defensive or angry as conversations about race and white privilege arise. On the adverse end of the spectrum, those who are fully aware and proactive have been found able to free themselves of the guilt, shame, and responsibility associated with White privilege and are able to engage themselves in actively fighting against its constraints (Hays, 2008).

#### *Current Inclusion of White Privilege in Training*

Today, counseling trainees are typically introduced to the concept of White privilege through diversity course offerings and workshops within their training programs. In her 2007 article assessing diversity course effectiveness, Kim A. Case purported that instructors often design diversity course curriculums to introduce to students to key concepts in the field of multicultural studies while attempting to maximize student understanding of various forms of group inequality and dissipate previously held stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes. In the article, entitled *Raising White*

*Privilege Awareness and Reducing Racial Prejudice: Assessing Diversity Course Effectiveness*, Case (2007) issued a questionnaire one week after the commencement of a course assessing the students' knowledge of White privilege by administering two commonly utilized tools: the White Privilege Awareness Scale, a six item scale that assesses the "recognition of systematic advantage for Whites in society." (p. 231) and a ten item scale from the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale, also referred to as CoBRAS, that measured the awareness of racism in society. Additionally, Case (2007) administered items addressing commonly held stereotypes of known racial and ethnic minorities, such as "Middle Eastern and Arab people are more violent than other groups", and items that assessed the students' varying levels of White guilt. (p. 232) Case then tracked the students' progress and investment in the course material through the semester, and reissued the same assessment tools at the conclusion of the course. It was found that both White privilege and racism awareness significantly increased over the course of the semester, with White students experiencing more guilt by the conclusion of the course, thus implying that their knowledge and belief of White privilege had increased as well. Despite these findings, students' prejudice levels against racial minority groups including Blacks, Arabs, and Jewish people remained consistent, with expressed prejudice against Latinos increased. Case (2007) attributed this to an increase in defensiveness that can often occur with an increase of feelings of White guilt. Case's (2007) study on assessing diversity course effectiveness suggests the importance of educating students on White privilege and cultural considerations. This education is even more important for counselor educators and trainees as their own biases and stereotypes can directly affect their clients and potentially cause harm.

While Case's (2007) assessment demonstrated that levels of White privilege knowledge and White guilt may increase, this does not ensure that stereotypes and biases against minority racial and ethnic groups will decrease. Like all individuals, counselors are prone to these same biases and stereotypes as reinforced messages, whether subtle or overt, can become imprinted into their belief system and lie dormant, remaining unchanged unless intervening events or data changes one's worldview (Arredondo & Fouad, 2007).

To help her students develop this knowledge, Sylvia Niehuis (2005) created experiential activities to help her students best understand White privilege. Niehuis (2005) states in her article detailing these experiential activities that teaching about White privilege and its implications in family science and service learning courses is crucial because to the majority of students in these courses are White and the majority of those being served are non-White. Niehuis (2005) also reinforced the belief that Whites may need a critical event or experience to understand White privilege, race, and their benefits from institutionalized systems of oppression. Niehuis (2005) believed that her students would not be able to access this critical event by reading articles in her classroom, so she developed an activity that would allow them to experience White privilege personally in the surrounding community.

Prior to developing her own activity, Niehuis (2005) reviewed five articles that suggested various methods to teach students about racial oppression and White privilege. Methods ranged from offering case studies to review and discuss, creating a video for students to watch that displays racial oppression in their own community, creating in-class projects with different amounts of supplies based upon privilege level, and

reviewing Peggy McIntosh's 2001 article entitled *White Privilege and Male Privilege*. Following review of these methods, Niehuis (2005) determined that while all of them were helpful in exploring White privilege with her students, none of them provided the critical event that she determined necessary.

Niehuis (2005) then created an experiential, community based field trip for her students which was drawn from examples of White privilege taken from Peggy McIntosh's article. Niehuis (2005) issued each of her students a handout that detailed specific items to be purchased by an African-American single mother in preparation for a date night, and instructed them to purchase the items at a local grocery or drug store and to be cognizant of the representation of African Americans within the desired items. For example, as an African American, one would seek books, magazines, toys, and cards that depict African Americans. Additionally, one would want bandages, stockings, and make up that matches their shade of skin. Finally, a list of questions, also provided by Niehuis (2005) would be answered by the participants and included within a reflection paper following the experience. The questions provided tools for students to consider and largely centered on ensuring the students were aware of the brands from which they could choose their products, the names of products, the choices of books and magazines that accurately depicted their criteria, and the sales associates and advertisements within their chosen stores.

Following the completion of this activity, Niehuis (2005) then provided her students with opportunities to both reflect upon and discuss their experience with others. Niehuis (2005) found that many students were able to articulate a much clearer understanding of White privilege and the implications it has for both their own daily lives

and the lives of those who are non-White. She presented her students with an opportunity to not only witness White privilege as it presents itself at the local grocery store, but to also experience the feelings that are associated with the frustration and difficulty of not having access to items that others find easily accessible. It is also important to mention that she prepared her students for this activity with discussions, readings, and coursework in the areas of multiple forms of privilege. These experiences prepared the students for their activity and allowed them to process it in a way that was beneficial to them. This preparation was conducted in an attempt to limit the potential negative responses that Whites have when confronted with their privileges. It has been found that when Whites are confronted with examples of racial inequalities or oppressions, their responses can be expressed in the form of increased racism as this confrontation is viewed as a threat to the group's societal position (Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer, 2006).

#### *Reactions to the Inclusion of White Privilege in Trainings*

In their 2006 article, *Racial Attitudes in Response to Thoughts of White Privilege*, Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer examine the responses of Whites when asked to reflect upon the privileges they have gained from membership in their racial groups. Participants were divided into three groups: privileges, disadvantages, and life experiences (control). The privileges group participants focused on the privileges they had encountered due to their race, the disadvantages group participants focused on the disadvantages they had encountered due to their race, and the life experiences group acted as a control by being neutral to privileges and disadvantages and focusing on their general life experiences. Participants were asked to reflect upon their lives and answer questions given to them determined by their group. Following the completion of this

activity, participants were then asked to complete the Modern Racism Scale, which measures racist attitudes by asking racially charged questions and having participants answer on a Likert type scale, with 1 being strongly agree and 6 being strongly disagree. Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer (2006) found that the highest levels of modern racism were correlated with the participants who were asked to reflect upon their privileges due to being White. Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer (2006) use Social Identity Theory as a means to help explain these responses. Social Identity Theory “argues that social groups are an important basis of self definition and the in group’s position in the social structure can have important affective consequences. (p.204) Therefore, many Whites have a positive social identity due to the majority status of their racial group; however, when the position or status of this group is questioned by acts of racial injustices and unearned privileges, it can cause defensive, angry, and potentially hostile reactions.

It is important to note that when these reactions are exhibited, Whites have an opportunity to process their thoughts and feelings as they begin deeper exploration into their worldviews and recognizing their privileges. It was also found in the study of Branscombe, et al. (2006) that when asked to do so, Whites are able to report the advantages they receive due to their skin color significantly more than they are able to list disadvantages. While it may not be a desirable activity, Whites are able to acknowledge that they are “relatively more advantaged than disadvantaged when they are explicitly asked to think about the consequences of their race.” (p. 207)

It is with this knowledge that White counselors and White counselor-educators are encouraged to participate in and develop extensive trainings that fully and

comprehensively address White privilege. It is the premise of this paper to suggest that by addressing White privilege and encouraging those in the counseling profession to confront their own biases and prejudices, counseling trainees will be able to develop the levels of self awareness that are required of ethically competent counselors. This awareness is one that cannot be obtained by sitting in a course passively reading articles and fact sheets on various cultures, races, and ethnicities. Instead, this awareness that can only be developed by allowing counselors to truly explore themselves and confront their own privileges through means of discussions, dyads, participatory experiential activities, and readings similar to those presented in this paper. When offering educational opportunities in this area, it is important to consider the time frame for which students are allowed to process their experiences and grow from them. Additionally, follow up supports should be offered to students in case further exploration and questioning is desired or needed.

### Expanding White Privilege Awareness in Counseling

#### *Purpose of Training*

Multicultural training is offered in graduate counseling programs throughout the nation, as it is an integral part of meeting the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs standards (CACREP, 2009) and having multicultural competence is considered an ethical responsibility by the American Counseling Association (American Counseling Association, 2005). It has been found that multicultural trainings have been linked to multicultural competencies (Brossart, et al., 2007).

The inclusion of White privilege into multicultural trainings is essential, as it allows counselors time for self reflection and the advancement of self awareness in this area. Multicultural trainings often address many considerations of working with races and ethnicities that vary from one's own, but the inclusion of White privilege can be neglected due to the sensitivity of the topic and the difficulty educators may experience when confronting their own biases and prejudices in this realm (Henze, Lucas, & Scott, 1998). Recently, scholars have vocalized the need for the inclusion of the study of White privilege into multicultural trainings, as it allows for the exploration of Whiteness and how it relates to a number of psychological, sociological, and historical constructs (Manglitz, 2003).

In counselor education and training, the importance of incorporating White privilege is great; as the current trend suggests that the counseling profession will continue to be dominated by White practitioners. Additionally, trends also indicate that the majority of counselor educators are also White, yet the majority of those receiving services from professionals in the field of counseling are non-White (Niehuis, 2005). White privilege can often be neglected in educational settings, as Whiteness and its resulting influence can perpetuate educational curricula, allowing for the absence of addressing this power construct (Manglitz, 2003). The counselor-client dynamic is already one created of perceived influence and power, and therefore racial considerations within this dynamic cannot afford to be neglected. Additionally, counselors who neglect to examine their unconscious biases and prejudices often risk expressing them in unintended ways (Arredondo & Fouad, 2007).

While counselors can not be expected to rid themselves of these biases, they can be held accountable for their awareness of their worldviews and the impacts they may have on their clients. Brossart, et al. (2007) cite two different studies conducted in 1996 by Sadowsky and Neville, et al. that found that when students in graduate counseling programs were offered multicultural training, results on a posttest were significantly higher in the areas of cultural self-awareness, knowledge, and skills when compared to pretest means. These findings support the idea that regardless of racial prejudice outcome, counselors possess a greater cultural awareness following multicultural trainings. When counselors and counselor educators experience multicultural trainings inclusive of White privilege education and reflection, they are given the opportunity to better serve their clients by addressing their own unconscious constructs that are impacted by the institutionalized racial constructs existent in our nation.

#### *Facilitation Considerations*

When conducting any training, there are a number of factors that should be considered. The first of these factors is the participants of the training. When presenting on White privilege, facilitators must consider the effectiveness of the training for all participants, both White and non-White. Counselors who are non-White also benefit from trainings on White privilege as it will assist them in their relationships with White clients, and they too must recognize their subconscious prejudices and biases in the realm of multicultural considerations and White privilege. Facilitators need to account for participant comfort and ensure that participants are in a non-judgmental, confidential environment prior to beginning the training. Participants need to be informed of these circumstances, as this knowledge will assist in improving comfort levels and benefit

disclosures within discussions. It is only with disclosures and experiences shared by participants that counselors are able to learn from each other, relate common experiences, and grow in the learning of other's experiences as related to White privilege. Finally, facilitators should consider the racial composition of participants to ensure that non-White participants are not out casted or put in the position of being the sole member of a non-White demographic. These considerations related to the racial composition of participants should be considered and addressed if needed within the discussion and processed among participants.

The second factor to be considered is the facilitators. Facilitators should have extensive knowledge of White privilege and multicultural studies and have attended trainings in this area themselves. Facilitators must be counselors, and be a non-judgmental, open presence within the training. In order to maximize the potential for cultural self-awareness, participants of the training need to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, reactions, and feelings regardless of what they may be. It is the facilitators' job to encourage participants to do so in a respectful, considerate -- and most importantly -- honest manner. Prior to the training, facilitators should consider all potential outcomes and prepare themselves for these outcomes.

Due to the sensitive nature of White privilege and multicultural trainings, the environment of the training should also be taken into consideration. If possible, the training should be held in an environment that is confidential, neutral, and comfortable. Participants may be internally uncomfortable during activities and discussions, and will therefore need an environment that best supports their external comfort needs. Providing

a comfortable environment will assist in the ability for participants to express their opinions and experiences and help maximize the training experience.

Finally, the reactions of the topic matter must be considered as it has been found that trainings on White privilege can evoke feelings, such as: guilt, anger, and defensiveness (Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer, 2006). Due to the number of potentially negative feelings, facilitators should consider these reactions when developing their training. Activities should be chosen carefully so as to present White privilege in a productive, considerate manner. Participants should be allotted ample reflection time and means to reflect in ways that are helpful to them, whether through individual reflection, group discussion, dyad discussion, or writing (Niehuis, 2005). It may be helpful to include a number of these varying reflection opportunities, so as to allow all participants reflection time in a manner that is helpful and productive. Additionally, careful consideration should be given to the time frame of activities and the training as a whole, and facilitators should be flexible with time allotments, as some activities might fuel greater emotion and sharing than others. Ultimately, it is the duty of the facilitators to ensure that participants are able to maximize their benefits by considering all of these factors and creating an inclusive, safe environment for participants to fully absorb and reflect upon White privilege and other multicultural considerations as related to counseling.

#### *Utilization of Activities and Resources*

Research has indicated multiple ways for White privilege to be addressed in multicultural trainings. It has been suggested that while experiential activities are best suited to address White privilege in educational contexts, they should be preceded by the

offerings of literature supporting the existence of the need for multicultural understanding and the existence of White privilege (Niehuis, 2005). Additionally, all activities and resources should be provided with the goal of increasing awareness of White privilege and helping counselors reflect on their own recognition of this privilege and its perceived impact on society. Henze, Lucas, and Scott (1998) identify five potential successful outcomes of trainings inclusive of White privilege education, as a means to evaluate one's training. They state:

More successful outcomes, depending on the time allotted, might include (1) development of shared definitions of terms such as *racism*, *power*, and *privilege*; (2) recognition that there may be several different perspectives on the same issue, and that our perspectives are shaped by our gender, racial/ethnic identity, and class background; (3) an acknowledgment that some people in our society have more power and privilege than others, and that this is not arbitrary but systematic along race, gender, and class lines; (4) an understanding that those who have less power and privilege have legitimate reasons to be angry, hurt, and frustrated; and (5) development of strategies that will enable participants to engage effectively with others in discussions about power, privilege, and racism. (p. 189)

By identifying these outcomes, Henze, Lucas, and Scott (1998) offer concise objectives by which counselors and counselor educators can measure the outcomes of their resources, activities, and trainings.

On the following pages, a number of recommended readings, tools, videos, activities, and guidelines are included to assist in the creation and implementation of White privilege trainings. These tools should be utilized with the intent of meeting the

above stated objectives, as offered by Henze, Lucas, and Scott (1998) and creating cultural self-awareness within counselors. When utilizing these resources, it is suggested that counselor educators incorporate only the number of resources that can be appropriately and adequately addressed within the given time frame of the educational experience. Allowing an adequate amount of time for each activity is recommended to ensure that those participating in the experience are allowed ample time for reflection, questioning, and discussion to allow for the full absorption of the materials and concepts presented. These resources and activities are presented in random order, and are offered only as examples of potential supports to be used in White privilege trainings. The resources are listed in the following order:

- Selected Additional Resources on White Privilege, to include:
  - Readings
  - Videos
  - Websites
- White Privilege Checklist Reading/Activity
- White Privilege Shopping Activity
- White Privilege Discussion Guidelines

## Selected Additional Resources on White Privilege

### Readings:

Kendall, F.E. (2006). *Understanding white privilege: Creating pathways to authentic relationships across race*. New York: Routledge.

McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies. *Working paper no. 189*. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College, Center for Research on Women, 1988.

Rothenberg, P.S. (2008). *White privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism*. New York: Worth Publishers.

Tatum, B.D. (1997). *"Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?": And Other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books.

### Videos:

#### *Class Divided (2005)*

Note: Originally broadcast in 1985

PBS Video; produced and directed by William Peters; written by William Peters and Charlie Cobb

*Summary: Documents the reunion of an Iowa teacher and her third grade class of 1970 that were featured in an ABC broadcast entitled "The eye of the storm." The video demonstrates the teacher's experimental lesson in discrimination and illustrates the power of institutionalized privilege.*

#### *Crash (2005)*

Lions Gate Films and Bob Yari Productions & DEJ Productions present a Blackfriar's Bridge and Harris Company production; an Apolloproscreen production; a Bull's Eye

Entertainment production; produced by Cathy Schulman ... [et al.]; directed by Paul Haggis; screenplay by Paul Haggis and Bobby Moresco

*Summary: A fictional work that explores racial tensions in modern America by bringing together strangers from multiple races and ethnicities through a car crash and following their interactions afterwards*

***How Biased are You? (2003)***

Discovery Channel; Films for the Humanities and Sciences; hosted by Forrest Sawyer

*Summary: Explores the history and practice of racism in America and extreme manifestations around the world. Utilizes various situations to demonstrate racism and prejudice in daily American occurrences and examines the bias-sensitivity test developed by Anthony Greenwald and Mahzarin Banaji which measures hidden biases in people of all ages.*

***Mirrors of privilege: Make Whiteness Visible (2006)***

Worldtrust Educational Services, Inc; a film by Shakti Butler; producer Rick Butler; directed by Rick and Shakti Butler

*Summary: Features the personal stories of a number of White activists and recounts their journeys of transformation through the stages of denial, defensiveness, guilt, anger, fear, and shame into their commitments to ending racism and educating others*

***The Color of Fear I (1995)***

Note: Originally Released in 1994

Stir Fry Seminars Consultating; produced and directed by Lee Mun Wah

*Summary: The video displays eight North Americans of different races discussing how racism affects each of them and how their time together has changed their anger and racial perspectives over the course of a three day weekend*

**Websites:**

**Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD)**

<http://www.amcdaca.org>

AMCD seeks to support and develop programs that improve racial and ethnic empathy and understanding through the deliverance of multicultural competency trainings. AMCD seeks to support continuing personal growth and improve offerings of educational opportunities in the realm of multicultural counseling for individuals of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. The website offers information on AMCD, as well as informative tools and resources to assist in the accomplishment of their mission. Additionally, related websites are presented to provide further information for site visitors.

**National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)**

<http://nameorg.org>

NAME is an organization comprised of individuals and groups in the field of education that have an interest in multicultural education. NAME provides resources, workshops, and national conferences to inspire dialogues on diversity and multicultural education. NAME currently has members from around the world, ranging from early childhood educators to college professors.

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

<http://www.naacp.org>

The NAACP, founded in 1909, is a national organization currently based out of Baltimore, MD that works to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all persons and to eliminate racial discrimination and hatred. The NAACP website offers educational materials and resources to support their mission.

**National Multicultural Institute (NMCI)**

<http://www.nmci.org>

NMCI, a private non-profit organization founded in 1983, was one of the first organizations nationally to recognize the United States' need for services, knowledge, programs, and skills in the field of multiculturalism and diversity. Today, NMCI offers conferences, workshops, and consultations across the country as part of its efforts to facilitate personal and systemic change and create an inclusive society empowered by its diversity.

**Teaching Effectiveness Program**

<http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/diversity/instructor/instructorprivilege.html>

The Teaching Effectiveness Program is a website based program sponsored by the University of Oregon's Teaching and Learning Center to assist educators in their endeavors to create and teach lessons in a variety of curricula. The website provides tools and resources to appropriately and comprehensively teach students on White privilege.

### **White Privilege Checklist Reading/Activity**

From: <http://www.case.edu/president/aaction/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf>

This list is based on an excerpt from Peggy McIntosh's essay on White privilege, titled *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack (1988)*. These dynamics are but a few examples of the privilege which white people classes have.

#### **On a daily basis as a White person...**

- I can if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
- If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
- I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
- I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
- I can turn on the television or open the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
- When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
- I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
- If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.

- I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
- Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
- I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
- I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
- I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
- I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
- I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group
- I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
- I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
- I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.
- If a traffic cop pulls me over, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
- I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.

- I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, out numbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
- I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.
- I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
- I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
- If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
- I can choose blemish cover or bandages in flesh color and have them more or less match my skin.

### **White Privilege Shopping Activity**

From: Niehuis, S. (2005). Helping white students explore white privilege outside of the classroom. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 7(3), 481-492.

This is an experiential activity offered to provide an example of an activity that can be performed in both workshop and classroom settings. After a gradual discussion of concepts related to White privilege and the need for self-awareness in this realm among counselors, participants can be divided into groups and given the materials to complete this task. It is recommended that individuals are not instructed to purchase the listed items, but instead are provided with paper and writing utensils to document the variety, location, and prices of listed items. A debriefing discussion and reflection will be necessary following the activity to allow participants to fully process the meaning and purpose of the task.

Once in formed groups, participants can be issued the following scenario:

Imagine that you are a 34 year old African American single woman with a young child. You have just met this gorgeous man who has asked you for a date in two days. You really want to make an impression on him so you intend to go to a grocery store to buy a few things that you will need to get ready for your date. While you are in the kitchen, trying to write your shopping list, making supper, and watching your 6 year-old daughter, you somehow manage to cut your finger. You use the last bandage you have at home and add “bandages” to your shopping list. Your shopping list now lists the following items:

Bandages

Silk stockings

Blemish cover/Make-up

Book and toy for your 6 year old daughter

Fashion magazine for fashion and beauty tips

Romance novel for your entertainment in case the date doesn't work out

Birthday card for your best friend (an African American woman who'll turn 40 in a few days)

Because you are an African American, you want to make sure that you buy bandages, silk stockings, and blemish cover/make up in a color that matches your skin color. Similarly, you will buy a fashion magazine created for an African American audience that gives beauty and fashion tips to African American women. Also, you feel that your daughter should develop a strong African American identity, so you intend to buy a children's book and a toy that feature pictures/stories/etc. of other African American children.

Because your friend is an African American woman, you'll buy a humorous birthday card, featuring African American cartoon figures. Finally, in case things don't work out with the date, you want to read a romance novel written by an African American author featuring African American people.

The scenario and items can be adapted and still be effective, but careful consideration should be paid to ensure that the items are culturally specific in order to guarantee a beneficial experience.

As previously noted, participants should be offered a lengthy debriefing and opportunities for reflection following the activity. The White Privilege Discussion Guidelines, also provided for reference, can be utilized to ensure a respectful and productive discussion.

### **White Privilege Discussion Guidelines**

Adapted from: Butler, Shakti (2006). Heart to heart conversation guide. *Mirrors of privilege: Making whiteness visible*. World Trust Educational Services, Inc., pp. 9-10.

The following guidelines can be offered prior to beginning discussions involving White privilege. Some may find reviewing these guidelines before each discussion helpful, as White privilege is often an emotionally charged and sensitive topic for many, regardless of skin color.

- **Remind participants of confidentiality**, for example:
  - *“Everything shared in this room is respected and will be kept confidential. You are free to participate at your own level of comfort, and asked to keep the contributions of others in this discussion private. If you feel a need to further discuss any portion of this conversation, please do so with one of the participants here today in an environment that supports the privacy of this discussion.”*
- **Utilize ‘I’ Statements**
- **Avoid Critiquing the thoughts, feelings, or experiences of others. Instead, focus on your own and reflect on what others’ contributions are invoking within you**
- **Be honest and willing to participate at your own level of comfort**
- **Listen to the contributions of others with a willingness to learn, consider, and change**

- **Resist the desire to interrupt others**
- **Build on others contributions by asking follow up questions or by sharing your own experience**
- **Suspend judgment of others and their offered experiences**
- **Continue reflecting, listening, and growing following this discussion**

### *Limitations and Recommendations*

When conducting any training, there are several limitations that should be considered. In reference to trainings on White privilege, it should be considered that there are multiple forms of privilege that are not being addressed. These privileges include gender, religion, sexuality, socio-economic status, etc. When limiting the scope to White privilege, the training is narrowed to only one of many cultural considerations and forms of privilege that counselors should regularly reflect upon. It may be useful for facilitators to mention these forms of privilege and ask counselors to reflect upon them independently or seek alternative trainings in these areas. Therefore, while not addressing them comprehensively, the seeds of thought have been planted and counselors can then reflect upon these factors during their journey of cultural self-awareness.

Additionally, as with all trainings that are conducted with an objective of participants gaining awareness, contributions from participants are an important component. Due to the need for such contributions, the above mentioned considerations should be factored, as the training may be limited without contribution of experiences from participants. Facilitators should not depend upon these contributions as a measure of the success of the training and should be prepared to accept private thought and reflection as an acceptable means of investment in the training.

Finally, it is not the purpose of this paper to purport that all counselors should be free of prejudices and biases against others. While studies have shown that participation in multicultural trainings has been correlated with lower levels of racial prejudice (Brossart, et al., 2007), it cannot be expected that all counselors who participate in multicultural trainings will have lower levels of racial prejudice. It is not the intent of this

paper to suggest that lower levels of racial prejudice will occur, but instead to demonstrate the need for counselors to reflect upon their own biases and prejudices as related to White privilege. It is suggested by this paper that counselors who examine their own thoughts regarding White privilege will further their levels of cultural self-awareness and maintain ethical standards within their counseling relationships.

### Conclusion

Ethically competent counselors are actively striving to be self-aware in all areas that affect both their personal well-beings and relationships with others. In a nation with a history and present that succumbs to institutional racism, it is essential that counselors examine their own privileges, biases, and prejudices. While counselors are able to gain a wealth of knowledge of different cultures and cultural considerations through multicultural trainings, they are not able to sufficiently reflect upon their own experiences and gain deeper self-awareness without the consideration of White privilege within these trainings.

Without having completed this duty, counselors risk harming their clients through unwanted expressions of these biases and prejudices. It is not only personally beneficial to counselors to learn of White privilege and its potential effects on their thought constructs, but it is professionally necessary for counselors to consider these effects as it is their ethical responsibility to assess their own worldviews, so as to prevent them from affecting their interactions with clients.

It is with this intent that the information and materials in this paper are presented. Supporting literature, and demonstration of need, tools, and resources are presented to establish a case for the necessity of expanded inclusion of White privilege into

multicultural trainings within the counseling profession. Counselors will need to assess their own levels of familiarity and comfort with these constructs prior to seeking trainings, yet it is the suggestion of this paper that all counselors experience multiple opportunities for growth and experience in areas that are related to unconscious prejudices and biases, especially in an emotionally-charged area such as White privilege. While increasing levels of self awareness may occur following participation in one of the activities offered in this paper, it is expected that counselors will partake in ongoing reflection of their thoughts and prejudices in the realm of White privilege.

## References

- American Counseling Association. (2005). *ACA Code of ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Ancis, J.R. & Szymanski, D.M. (2001). Awareness of white privilege among white counseling trainees. *Counseling Psychologist, 29(4)*, 548-569.
- Arminio, J. (2001). Exploring the nature of race related guilt. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 29(4)*, 239-252.
- Arredondo, P.& Fouad, N.A. (2007). Psychologists in cross cultural interactions with others. In P. Arredondo & N.A. Fouad (Eds.), *Becoming culturally oriented: Practical advice for psychologists and educators* (pp. 35-50). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Branscombe, N., Schmitt, M., & Schiffhauer, K. (2006). Racial attitudes in response to thoughts of white privilege. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 37*, 203-215.
- Brossart, D.F., Castillo, L.G., Conoley, C.W., Phoummarath, M.J., & Reyes, C.J. (2007). The influence of multicultural training on perceived multicultural counseling competencies and implicit racial prejudice. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 35*, 243-254.
- Chang, C.Y. & Hays, D.G. (2003). White privilege, oppression, and racial identity development: Implications for supervision. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 43(2)*, 134-145.
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2009). *2009 Standards*. Retrieved October 10, 2009, from <http://www.cacrep.org/2009standards.pdf>.
- Hansen, James T. (2009). Self-awareness revisited: Reconsidering a core value of the

counseling profession. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 87(2), 186-193.

- Hays, D. (2008). Assessing multicultural competence in counselor training: A review of Instrumentation and future directions. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 86(1), 95-101.
- Henze, R., Lucas, T., & Scott, B. (1998). Dancing with the monster: Teachers discuss racism, power, and white privilege in education. *The Urban Review*, 30(3), 187-210.
- Herlihy, B., Pierce, L.A & Watson, Z. (2006). Forging the link between multicultural Competence and ethical counseling practice: A historical perspective. *Counseling and Values*, 50(2), 99-108.
- Manglitz, E. (2003). Challenging white privilege in adult education: A critical review of the literature. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53(2), 119-134.
- Niehuis, S. (2005). Helping white students explore white privilege outside of the classroom. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 7(3), 481-492.
- Tatum, B.D. (1997). *“Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?”: And Other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books.
- Williams, E.N. (2008). A psychotherapy researcher’s perspective on therapist self-awareness and self-focused attention after a decade of research. *Psychotherapy Research*, 18(2), 139-146.